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ABSTRACT

This report describes the background, organization, design, evaluation, and recommendations of a demonstration project involving a model preschool for 3- to 4-year-old children learning English as a second language (ESL). The impetus for the project was the increase in the number of immigrant children in British Columbia. Objectives were to develop and implement a preschool program specifically designed to meet the needs of ESL children and to assess the program's value as a prototype for serving ESL preschool children. In the program developed, one teacher met with morning and afternoon classes of 15 children. Curriculum is discussed in terms of goals, orientation of children and parents, daily schedule, physical setting, monthly planning, concepts taught, and strategies used to expand children's ESL skills and awareness of their own and other cultures. The research component of the project included a study comparing children's effectiveness in peer interaction with their English-language abilities; a study comparing the classroom behavior of a class of children relatively proficient in English with a class of less-proficient ESL users; and a parent component that informally examined relations between home and preschool. Program evaluation was conducted by a university professor who observed both morning and afternoon groups. Recommendations for ESL preschools address general issues as well as initial procedures and orientation, program planning, classroom preparation, parent involvement, and administration. (CB)

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R E P O R T

Demonstration Preschool/ESL Project

Sexsmith Community School

Vancouver, British Columbia

Phases I & II

Sept. 1982 - June 1984

compiled by:
Patricia Wakefield
Project Manager

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I. BACKGROUND

Introduction

During the past decade increasing numbers of children in all areas of the province of British Columbia have been entering the school system with little or no knowledge of English. Though secure in the language of their homes, in their own cultural milieu and in their parents' love and concern they begin their formal education unable to communicate in the language of instruction and lacking the preschool skills and experiences common to the majority of their English speaking peers.

School Act (RSBC 1979, Chapter 375)

There is no coordinated approach within or without the school system to meet the needs of 3-4 year old children who do not speak English at home. The School Act (1979) precludes school boards from providing services to children under the age of five years. Kindergarten is available in school districts throughout the province although it is not part of the compulsory system.

The School Act states that the public education system shall provide all children with an equal opportunity for education. The underlying assumption is that all children will enter school understanding and speaking the language of instruction - standard Canadian English. No mention is made of children who speak other languages or of how they can have 'an equal opportunity for education.'

Government Responsibility

The concept of learning from the cradle to the grave is cyclical in nature. A family cannot properly fulfil its functions of child rearing if the basic requirements for living are not present, - employment, housing, nutrition, health care. Since early childhood is the optimum period for growth and development, it is essential for all children to receive quality care and experiences to ensure physical, emotional, social and intellectual growth. "Society has an obligation to supplement the resources of the family through education and other means so that the lives of children need not be restricted by the facts of their birth, so that all children can acquire the skills necessary to exercise their basic freedoms as citizens, so that having acquired those skills they may make an unhampered contribution to their society." (Admittance Restricted: The Child as a Citizen in Canada. 1978)

Obviously, such a grave responsibility cannot be ignored by any society nor by any government. Children who come from homes where English is not spoken are 'restricted by the facts of their birth' when they enter a mainstream monolingual educational system. This does not imply that such children are 'deprived' linguistically or culturally. It means simply that these young citizens have been denied their right to learn the <u>official</u> language used in the larger community.

Facts and Figures

According to figures issued recently by Statistics Canada, there are more than one million preschool children in the country. How many of them are in B.C. and how many of them come from non-English speaking homes can only be 'guesstimated' from other data.

- In 1982 B.C. received 18,999 immigrants. More than 1,000 of these were between the ages of 0 - 5.
- Provincial statistics for school enrolment indicate that approximately 20% of the students do not speak English at home.
- Vancouver School Board surveys reveal that 46% of the students (24,000) do not speak English at home.
- Of these 24,000 children, approximately 50% were born in Canada.
- In 1982 the proportion of English as a Second Language children entering Kindergarten in Vancouver reached 50%.

Concern in the Community

Teachers in the school system as well as in the preschool area, social workers, community groups, and concerned parents began seeking a forum for discussion of problems and possible solutions. Finally, four community groups represented on the committe of Directions ESL (the Immigrant Services Society of B.C., Britannia Community Services Centre, the United Chinese

Community Enrichment Society (SUCCESS) and the Association of B.C. Teachers of English as an Additional Language (TEAL) joined forces to sponsor a meeting.

In September 1980, a one day symposium entitled 'Preschool and the ESL Child' attracted over 200 early childhood educators, community workers and parents from all over the province. Five issues were identified by participants as critical for meeting the needs of English as a Second Language children and their families:

Teacher Training

Research and Data

Resource Development

Administration

Public Education.

In order to implement the recommendations pertaining to each of these issues, symposium participants appointed a committee called Preschool English as a Second Language, henceforth referred to as PRESL.

RATIONALE

After studying available research and data the PRESL committee proposed a Demonstration ESL/Preschool model based on the following rationale.

1. From statistics available it is estimated that there are significant numbers of preschool children (below 5) who do not speak English.

2. There is no provincial Ministry which assumes any responsibility for the rights and needs of young children (3-5) although some provision is made for children 'at risk.'

3. School boards, no matter how farsighted they may be, are precluded by the School Act from providing educational services for children under five years of age.

4. Preschool experience in B.C. is inadequate for <u>all</u> children. Day care centres are continually oversubscribed and are available only to those children whose parents qualify. Private preschool settings, while fairly numerous, cannot meet the need and exclude those who cannot pay fees.

5. Modern research has proved beyond doubt that the most productive years for language development are between three and five. Children expand their use of isolated concrete vocabulary to a functional knowledge of relationships between words, sentences, people and situations. They become aware of using language as a means of communicating. The introduction of another language at this point is accepted by children as just another vehicle for communication. Bilingualism can

develop easily and naturally for most children in a comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere.

6. Providing education for a multicultural society assumes a shift in attitude for many people. Parental attitudes, teacher attitudes and public attitudes are reflected in how all children learn and grow. A multicultural perspective beginning in early childhood enhances the child's self-concept, cultural identity, and awareness of others. "There is compelling evidence that in order to influence children's basic racial and cultural attitudes, we must start with the very young." (Ramsey, 1982).

II. PURPOSE PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

Sponsored by four community groups, the PRESL Committee, the Immigrant Resources Project, the Child Study Centre at the University of British Columbia and the Vancouver School Board, a demonstration Preschool/ESL Project was initiated at Sexsmith Community School in south Vancouver.

Purpose

The primary objectives of the Demonstration Project were two-fold:

1. to develop and implement a preschool program model specifically designed to meet the needs of ESL children.
2. to research and evaluate this program model as a possible prototype for serving ESL preschool children.

The questions the Project addressed are listed below:

1. What cultural variables are central determinants in the development and implementation of a successful ESL/ECE program?
2. What are the key components of multicultural program planning for:
   a) fostering the development of healthy self-concepts of ESL children
   b) creating broader and richer world views for all children.
3. What particular aspects of the preschool program are most effective in enhancing and stimulating language development?

4. What particular strategies are most effective for establishing and maintaining positive relationships with parents?

5. What is the relationship between positive parent involvement and the success of each child in the program?

Philosophy

The philosophical base upon which the Demonstration Project is founded reflects a belief in the commonly accepted theoretical foundations of early childhood education coupled with an equally profound belief that the reality of Canada's pluralistic society necessitates a multicultural perspective in every aspect of growing and learning.

The following are the philosophical precepts upon which the project is based:

1. A commitment to quality early childhood education which is play centred, child focussed and responsive to the physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs of young children.

2. A sensitivity to and appreciation of differing child rearing practices and the role of a particular cultural milieu in shaping the development of each child.

3. A conscientious effort to facilitate learning through multicultural program planning wherein cultural heritage is viewed as a core component of the prepared school environment and the ongoing curriculum development.

4. An emphasis on employing a variety of language stimulation techniques and strategies best suited to the needs of second language learners.

5. An innovative and dynamic approach to the issue of parent participation and parent education.

Goals

Based upon the foregoing philosophical statements, the goals of the preschool program became readily apparent. These were:

1. to provide first and foremost a quality early childhood education experience

2. to demonstrate sensitivity to differing child rearing practices and the role of culture in shaping each child

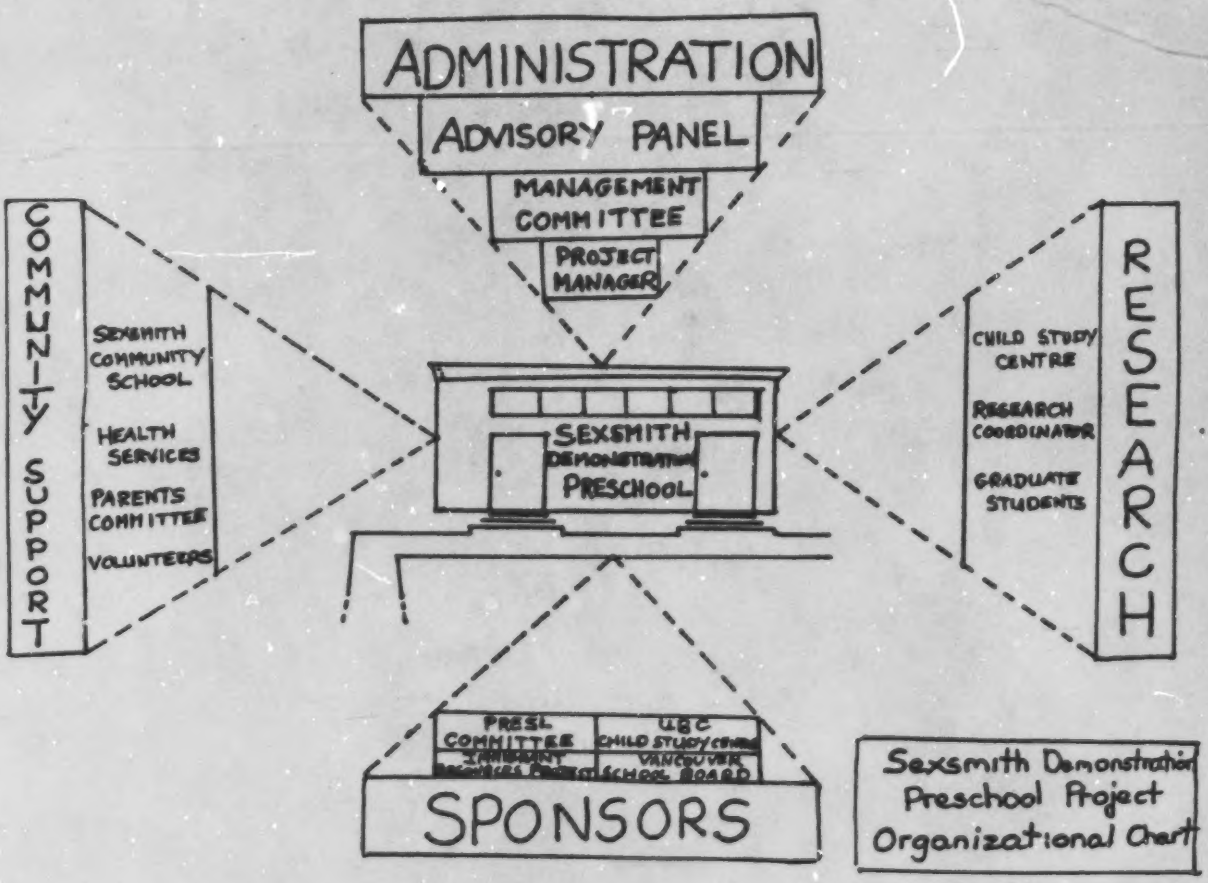
3. to facilitate learning through multicultural planning

4. to employ a variety of language stimulation techniques

5. to develop innovative methods and strategies for parent involvement and parent education.

III. ORGANIZATION OF PROJECT

To coordinate and maximize the roles and responsibilities of the sponsoring agencies, an organizational framework was necessary. A Project Manager was appointed to act as liaison between the sponsoring groups and the Project personnel. As the Project developed, an Advisory Panel was added to the original organizational chart to broaden community input and participation.



Sexsmith Demonstration Preschool Project Organizational Chart

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Roles and Responsibilites

Sponsoring Agencies

1. PRESL Committee
   - to initiate and coordinate Project proposal
   - to develop a Project Manual
   - to develop and initiate funding applications as appropriate
   - to provide consultative services to the management Committee
2. U.B.C. Child Study Centre
   - to design and implement the research component
   - to contribute video taping equipment clerical/technical assistance, and resources pertinent to the research
   - to supervise the work of graduate students involved in the project
   - to contribute the research component of the final report.
3. Vancouver School Board
   - to endorse and support the Project proposal
   - to provide the facility, classroom equipment and materials, and the consultative and administrative support necessary to the ongoing work of the Project.
4. Immigrant Resources Project
   - to provide consultative services to the Management Committee.

- to provide the services of bilingual/bicultural workers
- to provide the assistance of their coordinator of volunteers.

Management Committee

The Management Committee was composed of representatives from all of the sponsoring groups plus the Project Manager, the Coordinator of the Community School Programs, and the researchers assigned to the Project.

Meetings were held monthly, chaired by the Project Manager who was responsible for setting agenda and distributing minutes.

Responsibilities of the Management Committee included the following:

a) the development and implementation of policy relating to the Project
b) continuous monitoring and revision of program
c) supervision of parent programming
d) liaison with sponsoring groups
e) search for funding and resources
f) public relations
g) input into employment, supervision and evaluation of the teacher.

Advisory Panel

An Advisory Panel was added to the organizational structure after the first year of the Project to provide additional advice and expertise as a reflection of the broader community.

The Panel was to meet three times in November, February and May. Due to unforseen circumstances, however, the fall meeting was cancelled.

The Advisory Panel was planned to consist of:

a) additional representatives from the 4 sponsoring groups
b) a representative from the B.C. Preschool Teachers' Association
c) the Parent Committee (3)
d) elected officials from the Vancouver School Board, the Province of B.C. and the Government of Canada
e) all members of the Management Committee
f) others as deemed appropriate

Responsibilities of the Advisory Panel included:

a) receiving and reacting to progress reports from the Management Committee
b) advising re policy, programming and dissemination of information

c) contributing to and participating in the culminating report to the Vancouver School Board, June 1984.

Personnel

Project Manager

To ensure the successful functioning of the Project, the Project Manager's responsibilities were:

- to provide for clear communication between sponsors, advisory committee and personnel related to the Project
- to supervise Project implementation
- to coordinate the preparation of a final report describing and evaluating all aspects of the project.

IV. PROGRAM DESIGN

The Preschool program operates four mornings (9:30 - 11:30 a.m.) and four afternoons (1 - 3 p.m.) per week Monday through Thursday from the end of September to the end of June. Because the preschool is housed on school property, the time-table and holiday schedule (except for starting dates) are coordinated with that of the school system. Fifteen children are enrolled in each session on a first come, first served basis.

Funding - The program is funded principally from monthly fees paid by parents (current fee is $50 per month). This provides the teacher's salary and a small operating budget. The Vancouver School Board provides facilities, maintenance, incidental materials and administrative assistance.

Teacher - Sexsmith Preschool was already a licensed facility before the project began. In accordance with the regulations of the Provincial Community Care Facilities Licensing Board the ratio of children to teacher is 15:1. No assistant is required for this enrolment. The teacher hired held a provincial certificate in Early Childhood Education and had some previous experience in preschool settings.

Although at the outset of the Project she had had no specific training or experience in working with English as a Second Language children, she has since completed the specialized course offered at Vancouver Community College and

has developed herself professionally by reading, attending conferences and seminars oriented to English as a Second Language.

The ultimate responsibility for program implementation is the teacher's. Although there has been considerable input, support and participation from all the sponsoring groups, it has been the teacher's expertise and commitment to the children and their families, which has been the greatest contributing factor to success.

Support Staff - In any successful venture, there are always supporters "behind the scenes" without whom objectives could not be achieved. The principal of the school, Mr. Donald Cupit; the successive coordinators of the community programs, Ms. Rosemarie de Paoli and Mr. Bill Price; and the multicultural workers, Ms. Jasbir Ahluwalia and Mr. Andrew Shum; the secretary of the community programs, Ms. Melanie Co, and the kindergarten teacher, Ms. Louise Thompson, all contributed unstintingly of their time, advice and support. Their continuing interest is gratefully acknowledged.

Volunteers - The coordinator of volunteers for the Immigrant Resources Project recruited members of the community at large to assist in the program. A broad cross section of the city was reflected in the choice of volunteers, - male/female, professional/non-professional, native English

speakers/non native English speakers, students and parents or relatives of the children. The range of contributions by volunteers extends and enriches a program, providing a two way contact with the community.

Because of the experimental nature of the Project, no specific expectations or roles for volunteers were articulated by the teacher or the Management Committee. Consequently, it was very difficult for those volunteering on an occasional basis to contribute effectively.

The following recommendations are offered for future use, based on the combined experience of volunteers and project staff. It is recommended that:

- expectations and roles for volunteers be clearly defined in writing
- volunteers be provided with initial training and ongoing orientation as needed
- volunteers be oriented (by the teacher in charge) to specific program(s) in which they are to work
- volunteers be encouraged to contribute their specific skills to enrich the program
- there be planned recognition of the contributions of volunteers by those associated with the program.

V. CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

In reviewing programs for young children in the United States and Canada, it became apparent that a satisfactory curriculum, one which matched the needs of the multicultural, multilingual children of British Columbia was not presently available. The wide range of cultures was not generally accounted for in programs nor was it practical to provide all preschool classes in B.C. with multilingual teachers as is often recommended. Lack of government support for research and development also emerged as a factor.

Definitions

The definitions below are meant to clarify any confusion resulting from the terms English as a Second Language and Multiculturalism as used in this report.

1. English as a Second Language (ESL) children are those who do not speak English as a first or home language. Their competency in English language may be at varying stages of development.

2. The following excerpt is taken from a definition for Multiculturalism adopted by the Canadian Council of Multicultural and Intercultural Education at their recent meeting (May 1984): "Multiculturalism fosters a society and a Canadian identity in which people and groups of all cultures are accepted. Multiculturalism promotes human and group relations in which ethnic, racial, religious, and linguistic similarities and differences are valued and respected."

Philosophy and Goals

The curriculum is recognized as the focal point of every sound early childhood education experience since within it the

educational content of the program activities are developed and justified, and roles are established for teacher and learner. Modifications needed to accomodate children from multicultural, multilingual backgrounds will be made in program presentation and will consider the following:

1. The optimum time for language instruction to begin is in the preschool years (Walker, 1979).
2. ESL children have been shown to lag behind their English-speaking peers if they do not have facility in English, the language of instruction (Bhatnagar, 1976; Cummins, 1980).
3. Learning abilities, cognitive styles and expectations vary among cultures (Ramirez and Castenanda, 1975).
4. Self-esteem is positively affected by curriculum approaches that emphasize cultural heritages (Steiner and Cooper, 1980).

If children entering the primary school are to have an equal opportunity for education they must be given a chance to become fluent in the language of instruction. Based on the above research findings a multilingual, multicultural preschool curriculum will provide ESL children with optimal opportunities to learn to speak English. Program activities which consider variation in learning and cognitive styles will be developed. The curriculum will reflect the diversity of cultures represented in the classroom, the needs and expectations of the children and their families, and give equal respect to all languages and all cultures.

Curriculum Development and Implementation

Two graduate students and the teacher at Sexsmith monitored the curriculum and recorded in journals the accommodations necessary for presenting program activities to a group of multicuitural children.

The home language and culture of the children were important considerations in developing and implementing curriculum. Because the children at Sexsmith were at various stages of second language acquisition, a flexible program was developed to meet a variety of language needs. Program presentation was also modified to accommodate different cultural values since several ethnic groups were represented in the classroom.

A summary of modifications made in orientation, the daily schedule, materials chosen and presented, setting and program activities follows. An example of how to alter a monthly plan in a multicultural preschool has also been included.

Orientation

A carefully planned orientation process is essential to help children in a multicultural preschool adjust to a new environment. Since attending preschool was a first peer group experience outside the immediate family circle for many of the children, the teacher developed the following strategies to bridge the gap between home and preschool.

Each family met with the teacher on a personal basis to become acquainted and to exchange information about home and school routines. An interpreter was necessary in some cases. The teacher explained what was expected of the parents such as being on time, and what to send for snack each day. She familiarized families with the preschool by briefly describing the different areas of the room and explaining some of the routines and program activities.

A gradual entry procedure reduced some of the separation anxiety experienced by the children and made adjusting to the new environment and a peer group easier. During the first week half the class attended each session so that the teacher could spend time with the children individually and introduce them to the routines and program activities. This gradual entry made the adjustment from home to preschool more comfortable for the children. Key phrases such as "Good morning" and "I need help" were used consistently to assist the children in becoming familiar with words and phrases in a new language.

The Daily Schedule

Routines were established early to give the children a feeling of security in their new environment and to give an organizational framework to the day. The following schedule was implemented:

Morning/Afternoon

9:30	Greeting	1:00
9:45	Art Activities/Free Play Indoors	1:15
10:15	Circle/Group Activities	1:45
10:30	Snack	2:00
10:45	Books and Storytelling	2:15
11:00	Outdoor Activities	2:30
11:30	Dismissal	3:00

Music and non-verbal cues were used as strategies in the early weeks to indicate a change in activities (e.g. turning on a record indicated clean up time, putting away books meant group time, etc.). As the year progressed the routines were modified to add variation and flexibility to the regular presentation of program activities. For example, the free play period was altered to give the children an opportunity to learn to make choices. The children were asked to select an activity from a limited range of options.

Materials

Language and communication skills, cognitive, social and affective growth were encouraged through the child's daily interaction with a variety of materials including:

Blocks and related accessories

Dramatic Props and materials

Table Toys and Puzzles

Art Supplies and a Painting Easel

Sand and Water Materials

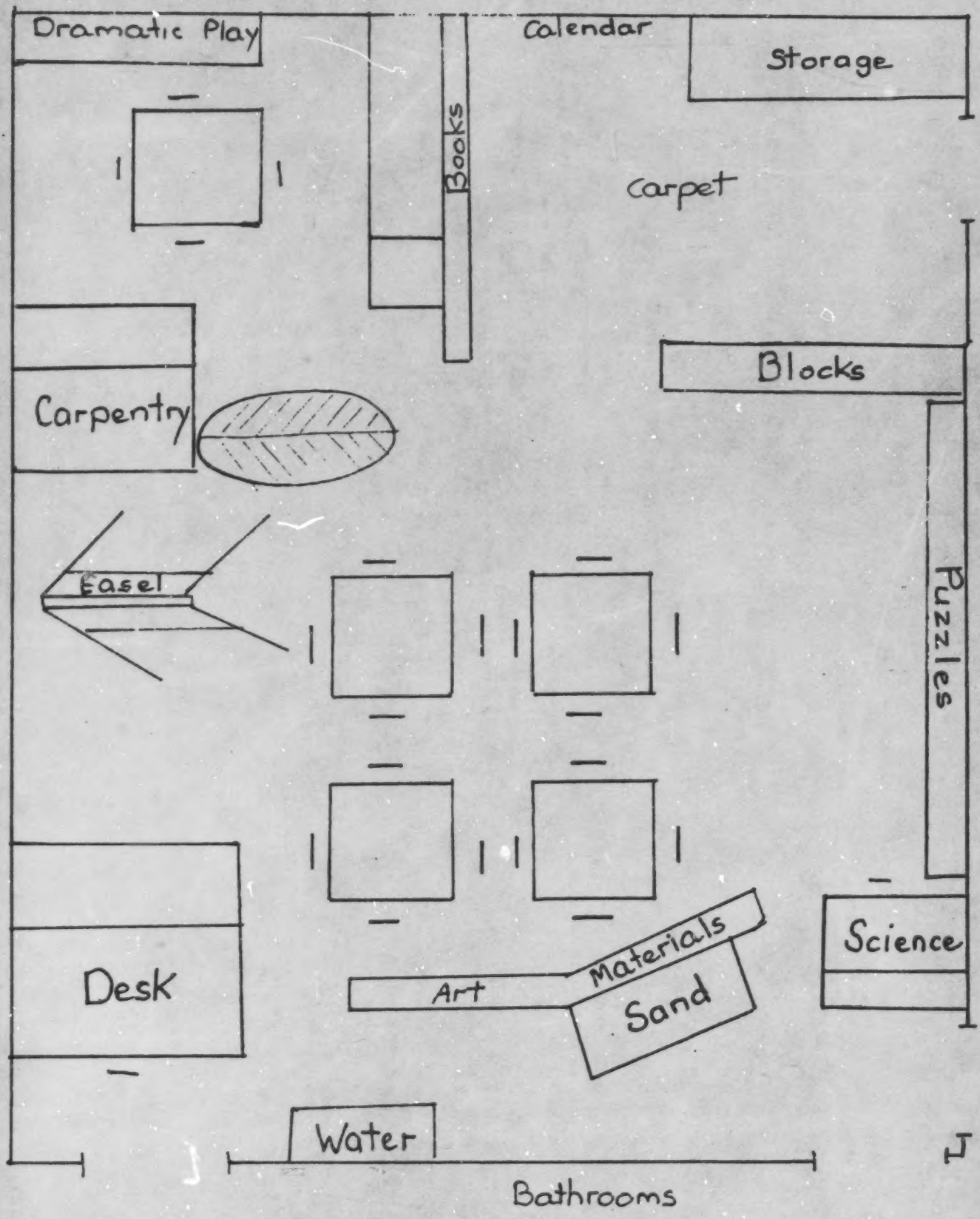
Books, Felt Boards and Storytelling Aids

Science Equipment including an Aquarium

The amount and type of materials presented by the teacher was monitored, varied and gradually increased as the year progressed. Each area was also made culturally representative wherever possible. For example; the dramatic area changed from a housekeeping corner to a grocery store during the year. Culturally diverse items were added to enable the children to feel comfortable in their surroundings. Familiar objects from many cultures such as saris, Chinese shoes, chopsticks and dolls representing the communities of children in the classroom were added. Pictures and displays which reflected a multicultural society and signs and labels written in the languages spoken by the children, were incorporated.

Setting

A diagram depicting the arrangement of the room is included. Though several arrangements were tried, the one depicted worked most effectively for ease of movement, teacher observation and access to the centres. The room arrangement also proved useful in helping the ESL children to anticipate where materials that appealed to them could be found.



SEXSMITH CLASSROOM PLAN

Monthly Planning

The program activities were planned by the teacher on a monthly basis. This framework was previewed by the Management Committee and modifications were suggested, such as celebrating Baisakhi in the month of April. However, the responsibility for curriculum planning ultimately was the teacher's. Continuous monitoring and evaluation were the responsibility of both the Management Committee and the research team from the University.

Content areas included:

- Art
- Music and Movement
- Science and Social Studies
- Mathematics
- Language Arts

Thematic Approach

Program activities were organized around themes chosen to broaden the child's experience from immediately familiar surroundings to a community environment.

Examples of themes used:

- Body Parts
- Family (Extended)
- Homes
- Animals (wild and domestic)

Weather/Seasons

Community Service Persons

Concepts

Words are labels for concepts. However, it cannot be assumed that concepts transfer directly from one language to another. Ideas such as given name/ family name, boy/girl, although universal in all languages, may evoke different perceptions as well as different language labels. Many cultures, for example, perceive the colour spectrum differently. Although English has a separate label for blue and green, many languages have only one term for this range of colour.

Visual aids and real experiences with concrete materials provided ESL children at Sexsmith with conceptual and linguistic information, and assisted them in developing skills in identifying, labelling and classifying. As the year progressed a greater emphasis was placed on patterning, categorizing, sequencing and exploring time and space. Examples of concepts developed;

a) identifying and labelling objects in the classroom
   e.g. easel, sand, water, paper, books, etc.
b) classifying and categorizing
   e.g. wild versus domestic animals
c) discovering simple patterns and applying them
   e.g. sorting buttons: red blue, red blue;
   large small, small large

Example of a Monthly Plan

February 1984

Theme: Community Service Persons

Conceptual and Linguistic Development:

- identifying and labelling of community persons such as nurse, doctor, fire, police, and mail persons
- understanding the role of each person in the community
- identifying key vocabulary and labelling objects and items associated with each role.

Program Activities

Program activities included all content areas; whenever possible special events were anticipated and followed up with experiences that reinforced the new concepts involved. The children were prepared for a visit from the school nurse by participating in experiences related to nursing. Art activities included making nurse's caps and band aids. Music involved singing about being sick, happy etc. in songs such as "Miss Polly." Books and storytelling experiences centred around health and nutrition. At the same time science experiences centred around growing carrot tops and sweet potatoes. Number concepts were developed through the counting of heartbeats.

Materials in the classroom were changed to involve the children in activities related to nursing. The dramatic play area

was changed into a medical centre; a bed, doctor's kit, stethoscope, band-aids, slings, as well as a nurse's cape and cap were added.

The visit of the nurse brought many opportunities for the children to develop language arts skills. Listening and responding to the nurse's discussion aided oral communication. Later medical bills were made assisting in the development of the fine motor skills needed for writing.

Cultural diversity was also a component of the dialogue with the nurse. The nurse discussed nutrition by using foods familiar to the children, such as roti, chapatis, lentils, soybeans and rice.

Holiday Celebrations in February

Two celebrations occurred in the month and became part of the planning: Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day. Both celebrations provided experiences for the children which enlarged their awareness of culture and language.

Chinese New Year celebrations included making large fish kites and flying them during outdoor play. A collage of rats reflected the Chinese "Year of the Rat". Lanterns, lucky money envelopes, Chinese music, books about China, and making Chinese scrolls were a few of the month's activities. Sharing Chinese tea, egg-drop soup and participating in a dragon dance involved the children in experiences important in the Chinese

culture. Brightly coloured streamers, pictures and posters on the walls, and a large Chinese New Year sign in Cantonese, Punjabi and English decorated the room.

To the Chinese children and their parents these program activities demonstrated a respect for their cultural heritage. To the other children the activities demonstrated an acceptance of cultural diversity and provided opportunities for participating in new experiences.

Valentine's Day was celebrated in a similar fashion, incorporating into the daily routines activities such as making cookies, exchanging cards and printing hearts. Children and parents from minority cultures had opportunities to learn about the celebration of a popular majority culture holiday.

Sharing information through experiences relevant to the interests of the children encouraged cultural awareness resulting in a mutually rich environment for all children.

Teacher's Role

The ratio of children to teacher was 15:1. There were no full time assistants, employed or volunteer. However, several Early Childhood Education student - teachers from local colleges participated in the program during practicum. Effective teaching techniques were developed for language extension and expansion as well as for improving the multicultural climate of the classroom. These were:

Strategies for Expanding and Extending Language

Developing fluency in English was an important component in developing curriculum for ESL children. Language was stimulated and expanded or extended on an ongoing basis during the daily presentation of activities. Some effective techniques were:

1. Repeating the same linguistic forms for greetings, routines ets.

   e.g. "Good morning Tanya. How are you today?
   Clean up time. Story time. etc."

2. Giving linguistic form to the function or concept the child already understands.

   e.g. "Yes, that's a car.
   That's a red car."

3. Talking to the child even if there is no immediate verbal response. Children do not produce in the second language until they are confident and ready.

4. Expanding and extending the child's attempts to communicate by suggesting vocabulary and structure.

   e.g. Child: "Hat."
   Teacher: "Yes, that's a hat.
   It's a red fireman's hat.
   Would you like to put it on?
   You're wearing a red fireman's hat."

5. Encouraging children to share feelings and express their emotions.

e.g. Art Work

"What a nice painting Tanya.
I like the big yellow sun.
It makes me feel happy.
Do you feel happy when the sun shines?"

6. Responding to overt behaviour in positive ways.

e.g. Child protecting a block castle by encompassing it with his arms.

"That's a big castle Mandeep.
We'll be careful that we don't knock it over. Have you seen Mandeep's castle Roxanne? He's very proud of it."

7. Pairing and grouping ESL children with good models of English.

e.g. Playing a small group game with two English speakers and one ESL child.

8. Sharing and extending the child's first language.

e.g. Creating an atmosphere in which the child feels free to express himself in whatever language he chooses, - first or second. Some children enjoy 'reading' or telling a story in their home language.

9. Encouraging shy or withdrawn children to speak by giving them opportunities to do so in non-threatening situations.

   e.g. Asking a withdrawn child to help another child select a song during circle, or playing a guessing game with the withdrawn child such as "I spy".

10. Providing opportunities for all children to be "knowers" so that they can share information.

   e.g. writing small group stories together, or telling them orally.

Strategies for Enlarging Cultural Awareness

Since respect and acceptance of each child's cultural background is necessary for developing positive attitudes and healthy self-concepts, the teacher devised methods for including cultural diversity in the program activities. Effective techniques were:

1. Encouraging expressions of culture

   e.g. Providing activities which included something familiar to each child, adding materials reflecting the multicultural nature of the enrollment.

2. Providing multicultural experiences within the child's immediate environment in a concrete way, using parents whenever possible.

e.g. Avoiding abstract discussions of children in other lands and relating cultural activities to the daily experiences of the children in the preschool such as sharing a celebration or a material brought by a child.

VI. RESEARCH

The purpose of the research component of the Sexsmith Preschool Project was to develop a framework for a multicultural curriculum model which could be used as a prototype for pre-schools with a high English-as-a-second-language (ESL) enrolment, and to provide a theoretical base for curriculum development.

During the first year (1982-83), the research was designed to discover the relationship existing between an ESL child's level of social development and the child's ability to speak English. Through formal and informal observations of an ESL child's behaviour during free play in the preschool, it was anticipated that underlying factors would become apparent which have an effect on social and cultural adjustment, particularly in the area of language development. Simultaneously, an on-going record was kept of teacher strategies unique to a multicultural/multilingual setting. These strategies were evaluated and served as a basis for implementing an experimental curriculum the following year (1983-84).

During the second year of the project, the research team carried out a comparative study of curriculum activities presented to two groups, one of mainly English speaking children and the other of mainly non-English speakers. Presentation of these activities was recorded on video tape and analyzed in terms of their potential for meeting eight key objectives.

They are as follows:

1. Acting directly with materials.

2. Exploring, using all five senses.
3. Discovering relationships (including relationships between objects and language).
4. Manipulating, changing and combining materials.
5. Meeting individual needs (particularly the specific cultural and linguistic needs of the ESL child.)
6. Providing opportunities to make choices.
7. Incorporating multicultural experiences.
8. Providing opportunities for language extension.

Testing Procedures

a. Testing English Second Language Children

Both formal and informal measures were used to assess second language ability. Informal observations of spontaneous speech samples were collected through the year and the Preschool Language Scale was administered at the beginning and the end of the year as a formal test.

The Preschool Language Scale (P.L.S.) of Zimmerman, Steiner and Pond was selected in order to measure both receptive and expressive communication skills and abilities. The P.L.S. is simple to administer, comprehensive enough to measure the wide scope of the beginning language stages and is readily available. There were two sections to the test. The first was auditory discrimination which was used to determine whether the child could process instructions and demonstrate that ability. The verbal ability section measured whether a child could verbalize adequately as shown by responses to a series of graded tasks. The testing was carried out over three months in the fall and

repeated again in the spring. Results showed the language ability (in English) of ESL children to be approximately two years behind their English speaking peers. When the same children were tested a year later, the same developmental gap remained. The Revised Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-R) and the Expressive One Word Test (Gardiner) were used in the second year as language measures.

b. Testing the Social Competence of ESL Preschool Children

There are very few instruments available for measuring social competence at the preschool level and none at all designed specifically for ESL preschoolers. It was decided, therefore, to use the Peer Interaction, Quality-Effectiveness Scale (PI, Q-ES) developed by Mary Wright. This measure of a preschooler's social competence is based on child/child interaction rather than interaction between child and adult. The more competent a child becomes socially, the less interaction he initiates with an adult. Frequency and quality of these attempts were not found to be as important as effectiveness. Wright states that " . . . the variable which most consistently distinguished the most from the least competent children was the successfulness of their attempts to influence the behaviour of a peer." All eleven items on the PI, Q-ES checklist are given equal weight and are only scored if they have a successful outcome.

Formal Research Study - 1982-83

The research was designed to provide a theoretical base

for making decisions regarding multicultural curriculum development for early childhood education programs, developing teacher strategies for working with ESL children, and teaching English as a second language.

Subjects

The original sample consisted of sixteen children, randomly selected from the 30 enrolled children who were learning to speak English as a second language. These sixteen children were selected from both morning and afternoon classes. Unfortunately, eight of these children were withdrawn from the program in December because of an increase in the fees. The research continued with the eight remaining subjects.

Hypothesis

ESL children enrolled in a preschool program where English is established as the medium of communication will not require English language ability, as measured on the Preschool Language Scale (P.L.S.), in order to achieve social competence as measured on a social interaction scale (PI, Q-ES).

Method

Formal measurements of language were obtained using the P.L.S. from all children in the sample group in October 1982 and May 1983. Ten-minute video tape recordings of each subject in the sample group were taken during free play time on separate days twice in the fall and again twice in the spring. Each

video tape was transcribed, and then scored on the PI, Q-ES Interaction Scale by a team of four observers, who viewed the video tapes together.

A statistical analysis (Pearson r) was carried out on the language scores and social competency scores of each subject in order to discover if there was a correlation between a subject's level of social competence and ability to speak English.

Analysis of the Data

In conducting the Pearson r on scores from both measures, correlation coefficients of $r = .516$ (Auditory ability and PI, Q-ES) and $r = .428$ (verbal ability and PI, Q-ES) were obtained. These correlation coefficients were not significant at the .05 level of significance ($df = 2$), and therefore the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Conclusion

ESL children enrolled in a preschool program where English is established as the medium of communication will not require English language ability, as measured on the Preschool Language Scale (P.L.S.), in order to achieve social competence as measured on a social interaction scale (PI, Q-ES). This is at first a surprising result, but further scrutiny of the results, together with the informal observations of the subjects, points to other factors at work besides ability to communicate in English. These other factors are instrumental in enabling a child to demonstrate social competence in peer interaction. However, it

should be noted that social interaction cannot develop beyond the initial stages without linguistic interaction.

Discussion of the Results

In comparing individual scores on the P.L.S. and PI, Q-ES, a high score in auditory and verbal ability did not automatically correspond with a high score in social competence. A child who was successful in social interaction with peers may have a low score on the P.L.S., whereas another child who demonstrated ability to use the English language might prove to be slow in making friends, and therefore achieve a low score on the measure of social competence.

Observations indicated that individual differences in personality traits such as sociability and motivation to interact and communicate with peers affected ability levels on both measures. Individual differences in learning to speak English, and in the strategies used to communicate, were also a key factor affecting total scores. Some children proved to be "risk takers" in attempting to communicate in English. They seemed to express themselves confidently using the limited amount of English they had learned. Other children learned key phrases, such as "happy birthday," to stimulate and sustain play episodes. This strategy proved so successful for one subject that she continued to use it through the year without apparently feeling the need to expand her knowledge of English much further.

Learning to speak English, in fact, did not appear to be a priority for any of the children in the sample. They appeared to be more interested in making friends with others who had similar

interests. Learning to speak English became only one means of achieving this goal.

INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS 1982-83

In addition to the formal research study which looked specifically at the socio-linguistic relationships at work in a multicultural/multilingual setting, data were collected from informal observations of the ESL children in the group. These data, together with those from the formal research study, were used to answer the following questions:

1. What are the typical entry behaviours of ESL children?
2. What factors with regard to the teacher are important in achieving cultural adjustment in the preschool setting?
3. What strategies do children use when they have to interact socially without the medium of a common language?
4. What is the relationship between learning to speak English and the level of play?
5. How does the increasing ability of the children to speak English affect the functioning of the group?
6. Are there individual differences in the way children cope with their inability to communicate in a play situation?

The following is a very brief discussion of informal observations related to the above questions.

1. What are the typical entry behaviours of ESL children?

Children entering the preschool for the first time showed a wide range of behaviour such as temper tantrums, withdrawal, solitary play with familiar objects, inability to settle down to purposeful play, uncontrollable sobbing for weeks, and forming clusters of same culture/language groups. Some children, however, appeared to adjust to the program with little difficulty.

2. What factors with regard to the teacher are important in achieving cultural adjustment?

   a. Accepting behaviours which incorporated behavioural norms and expectations of other cultures.

   b. Modelling new behaviours and attitudes; e.g., acceptance of unfamiliar foods from different cultures, and modelling the social conventions of the English language and culture.

   c. Introducing small group activities to include children from different cultural backgrounds. In this way, children shared the experience of working together for a common goal and learned to interact with new friends.

   d. Promoting cross-cultural friendships by suggesting that children play together outside the classroom setting.

   e. Encouraging the participation of children in each other's cultural experiences by including materials from different cultures in the classroom and, where appropriate, celebrating each other's cultural festivals.

   f. Encouraging children to express their own identity by discussing similarities and differences in informal discussions; e.g., "Who has brown eyes?", or "My hair

is black because I am a Chinese people."

3. What strategies do children use when they have to interact socially without the medium of a common language?

   a. English was accepted very early as the medium of communication in the classroom, although children became increasingly able to "code switch" from their mother tongue to English, depending upon whom they were addressing.

   b. Children showed many individual differences in the way they communicated with peers in order to become part of a social group. They used non-verbal means such as shouts, gestures, acting silly, and international words such as hot dog, pizza, bang bang. They developed key phrases such as "let's go," "happy birthday", "no, no". They also made use of play objects to promote a game, such as the doctor's kits, cash register and camera.

4. What is the relationship between learning to speak English and the level of play?

At first, the children engaged in mainly solitary play with some medium with which they were comfortable; e.g., crayoning. The teacher reinforced the children's activities by describing their work for them in English. Children playing with water, sand or play dough began to interact with each other. Materials such as these appeared to be particularly good at fostering early forms of social play. Associative play began when the

children used some form of communication meaningful to the group, such as familiar key phrases, "happy birthday," and "fire,fire." Cooperative play developed only when the children used words in simple sentences, "I am Batman, and you are Spiderman."

5. How does the increasing ability of the children to speak English affect the functioning of the group?

Inability to express feelings and needs often resulted in temper tantrums or acts of aggression towards others. Gradually, with consistent adult guidance, the children learned to substitute words for actions and were able to resolve their own conflicts. As children developed their second language, they were able to gain better control of their environment. They were also able to take responsibility for their own behaviour and, in some cases, that of their peers.

6. Are there individual differences in the way children cope with their inability to communicate in a play situation?

Children showed many different approaches, other than verbal, in communicating with each other in order to participate in a play situation. Some children relied on their ability to show leadership through acting out their ideas. Other children participated by attempting to follow the theme of the play by copying appropriate gestures and sounds made by the others involved. Others joined in by contributing objects that could be used to further the game.

FORMAL RESEARCH STUDY - 1983-84

A comparative study was conducted of the two groups (AM and PM) in the second year, one of which had a predominance of English speaking children while the other consisted mainly of non-English speakers. The purpose of the study was to compare the behaviour of each preschool group in response to five typical curriculum activities presented to each of the two classes. The role of the teacher was analyzed in order to discover what particular strategies and skills she employed in order to implement a successful activity. In investigating both the behaviour of the group and the role of the teacher, it was hoped that information would be gained that would prove useful for developing a curriculum for multicultural preschools.

Subjects

Fifteen preschool children aged three and four were enrolled in each of the two classes. The morning group consisted of five children who spoke English well, seven who had some English, and one child who had no English at all. The afternoon group consisted of two bilingual children, ten who had very little English, and two with no English. Two children were withdrawn in the morning and one in the afternoon to give a total of thirteen and fourteen respectively for each class. One trained preschool teacher supervised both the morning and afternoon class with the occasional assistance of volunteers or early childhood education practicum students.

Method

The Peabody Receptive Language Test (PPVT (R)) (Dunn and Dunn, 1981) and the Expressive One Word Test (Gardiner, 1979) were administered to all subjects in both morning and afternoon groups in the fall (1983) and the spring (1984) to assess their entry and exit level in receptive and expressive English.

The following five curriculum activities were selected as typical experiences offered in most preschools.

1. Structured activity (making apple sauce) which was presented to a small group (October 1983).
2. Teacher directed circle (Hallowe'en theme) (October 1983).
3. Free play (November 1983).
4. Finger painting (January 1984).
5. Outdoor play (February 1984).

Each of the above activities was presented to both groups, filmed on video tape and then rated by independent observers on a checklist of eight key experiences. This system was based on a similar one used to evaluate curriculum experiences in the Headstart Model, Un Marco Arbieto. (see page 2.)

Results

In comparing responses to all five curriculum activities, the group with some proficiency in English responded, on the whole, more independently and more assertively, than the others as they participated in each of the activites. The group of non-English speaking children appeared to be more hesitant in their approach to materials and activities. This may have been

because they often seemed to be waiting for the teacher to initiate an activity or model the actions for them before they began to participate. The question arises as to whether or not this behaviour was due to inability to respond to verbal directions, uncertainty caused by lack of previous experience, or confusion because of conflicting values.

In comparing the play behaviour of each group, both indoors and outdoors, the responses of the children in each group varied considerably. Indoors, the children who could communicate well with each other were able to function in fairly large groups. They were able to develop play sequences that progressed through a wide variety of themes. The play behaviour of the afternoon group appeared to be bound within the context of the frame set by the material, toy or game with which they were playing. If, for instance, the children were constructing railway tracks, making cookies with the play dough or playing a game of catch outside, the play remained static, limited by the possibilities contained within the context or setting in which the play was taking place.

The wide range of abilities and previous experience emphasized how difficult it is for the teachers to meet the needs of children who come from many different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and have varying levels of ability in speaking English. To accommodate the different needs of the children in the morning and afternoon groups, it became necessary for the teacher to change her approach.

In the morning, the children's receptive language scores ranged

from 0 - 126 (with a mean score of 79.8) on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (Revised). The proficient English speakers within the group appeared well able to understand the concepts and themes introduced by the teacher, and to participate in the activities presented. They were able to take advantage of the learning possibilities within the prepared environment without much teacher direction. Consequently, the teacher was able to assume the role of facilitator, using language spontaneously within social situations to stimulate and maintain conversational exchange.

In the afternoon group, however, the situation required a different approach. Peabody test scores ranged from a 0 - 107 (with a mean of 52.9). The passivity of the non-English speaking children pervaded the atmosphere of the group. This behaviour could have been caused by hesitation to participate in group activity, by unfamiliarity with the materials (e.g. water table, finger paint), or by inability to understand verbal cues. The teacher had to assume an active, directive role to help the children interact with the environment and with each other. The language she used had to be considered, structured and reinforced non-verbally so that the children understood. The teacher spent a great deal of time and effort in making the children feel comfortable and secure. Although they were always encouraged to participate in activities and interact with materials, there was no pressure on them to do so until they felt confident and ready.

In conclusion, groups of multicultural children, whether

heterogeneous, consisting of a wide range of abilities as in the observed morning group, or homogeneous as in the afternoon group, require a program adjusted, diversified and revised to meet their needs. The teacher plays a significant role in the ESL child's success in learning to speak a second language. Much will depend on the teacher's ability to structure the learning environment to promote language learning. Children do not acquire language in the classroom by osmosis, and teacher intervention (in some form) is necessary (Brown, 1979). The teacher has to strike a balance between structured and unstructured activities to ensure that children experience language in a naturalistic setting. It is essential, however, that children's second language acquisition be systematically monitored. The optimum environment for language learning appears to be one in which the child has English models, adults and peers, who are able to stimulate and extend language input.

Summary

The two year research component at the Sexsmith Demonstration Preschool provided useful information about the relationship between social interaction and ability to speak English as a second language. Children were observed to use many strategies to interact socially with each other. Initial success was not dependent upon the ability to speak English. As play became more mature, however, the need to communicate verbally with each other became increasingly important.

In the second year of the study, the comparison of the two classes with different ability levels of English identified

some curriculum areas that require modification to meet the needs of children from different cultural backgrounds such as circle, free play, outdoor play and certain art activities. More research is needed in these areas.

PARENT COMPONENT

The purpose of the parent component of the research was to informally examine relations between home and preschool. Two graduate students observed parent-teacher interactions recording strategies they perceived to be effective in fostering good home-preschool relations. Strategies promoting parent involvement and techniques for increasing parent education were noted. The specific research questions addressed were:

1. What particular strategies are most effective for establishing and maintaining positive relationships with parents?
2. What is the relationship between positive parent involvement and success of each child in the program?

This investigation was based on discussions of parent involvement in other programs with a multicultural focus and on the meagre information to be found in the literature. The importance of effective home school relations, however, is undeniable; they assist children in interacting cooperatively with peers, help teachers facilitate second language acquisition, and seem to be essential for ensuring that the overall educational experience is successful for all children (Cohen and Manion, 1983; Cummins, 1981). Parents have a rightful, natural role as teachers and transmitters of culture: their involvement

in the program activities of a multicultural preschool broadens and enriches the experience for all children (Berryman, 1982).

Initial Interview

During the first week of the school year the teacher met individually with parents to obtain administrative information and to introduce them to the learning environment. It became immediately apparent that efforts had to be directed to the extended family because aunts, uncles and grandparents often lived in the home and influenced or were responsible for child rearing practices. At the initial parent interview members of the extended family were often present. Though the teacher set times for interviews, the parents did not ahere to them. Instead parents, extended family members and friends arrived regardless of scheduled times.

Parent-Teacher Relationships

The teacher established secure and trusting relationships by warmly greeting parents, communicating non-verbally and verbally as appropriate, and encouraging parents to remain in the pre-school until they felt comfortable and secure enough to leave their children. Parents were assisted by the teacher in dealing with separation anxiety; for some families leaving a child at preschool was a new experience which made them feel uncomfortable.

In the early weeks the teacher also made a concerted effort to ensure that parents understood and adhered to the hours of operation. Many of the families did not have sufficient English

language skills to comprehend what was expected of them, therefore inevitably arrived too early or too late.

Parent Education

Parents were helped to understand the value of many of the program activities for child growth and development. Some activities such as finger painting and water play were unfamiliar to many families and therefore thought of as messy or not necessarily identified with learning. The teacher found many ways to communicate to families the value and importance of the preschool experience:

a) Parents and families were welcomed as observers or participants in the daily program activities.

b) If the teacher observed a parent puzzled by an activity, she attempted to explain the value of the activity for child development.

c) Print materials containing information and explanations about the program were translated whenever possible.

d) Signs in Punjabi, Cantonese, Tagalog and English were hung over appropriate areas of the room explaining the importance of the program activities.

e) Additional information was conveyed more formally through an organized parent meeting. The teacher presented the daily schedule of activities to the parents and showed short video tapes of the children.

A group circle was demonstrated with the children who were present.

f) Several times during the year, multicultural home school workers were used to ensure parental understanding.

Promoting Parent Involvement

The multicultural group of families brought to the preschool tremendous diversity in beliefs, values, child rearing practices and cultural backgrounds. However, involving parents in the program activities was not always easy nor was encouraging them to share their cultural heritage always successful. A summary follows of some of the strategies used in the program.

Successful Strategies

The following activities worked successfully in initiating and encouraging parent participation:

1. On an ongoing basis the teacher and families exchanged cultural information informally through daily interactions between home and preschool. This provided insight into differences that existed between and within ethnic groups. For example; A Divali display was well received by many Indian families but rejected by one family who wanted nothing to do with the celebration since it was no longer a meaningful part of their life in Canada.

2. Home visits were initiated by the teacher between children of different cultural groups; a child and the teacher visited the home of another child for lunch. Later the experience was shared informally with peers in the classroom. As a result cross-cultural friendships developed between the children.
3. Sending special invitations to parents requesting that they join in holiday celebrations at preschool resulted in enthusiastic parent participation. Many families attended, became involved in the activities and enjoyed sharing experiences with the teacher and their children.
4. A successful strategy for involving parents as a resource for cultural information often arose out of the "teachable moment". Spontaneous cultural exchanges initiated by a parent and extended into the classroom through the teacher's encouragement worked most effectively. For example: One father arrived at preschool with Indian sweets to be shared with the children. On another occasion a Chinese mother brought lentil tea in a thermos for the teacher and children to sample.

Less Successful Strategies

Some program activities were successful in the sense that parents participated actively, however these activities did not achieve the objective of introducing culturally relevant materials.

1. A book exchange initiated by the teacher between home and preschool with the hope of acquiring multicultural books was disappointing. While most of the parents were involved in assisting the children to exchange books, no multicultural books were sent from home. Instead the books sent were in English and not related to the child's culture.
2. The teacher requested food packages from home to be used as props for a grocery store in the dramatic play area. Again many parents participated in sending commonly available packages but did not send any imported ones.

This raised a number of questions:

- Was it the parent's perception that materials brought to preschool should be Canadian?
- Had many families already adapted so readily to foods available in Canada that this had influenced their lifestyles?
- What additional strategies need to be developed to encourage parents to share their own diverse cultural experiences?

Further research is needed in these areas.

Parent Involvement and the Child's Success

As previously stated, parental involvement in the pre-

school fosters children's successful adjustment to a new environment. The informal observations of a graduate student combined with informal teacher assessment suggested that the following factors may need further examination:

1. There may be a relationship between parental involvement and the child's successful adjustment. Parents who were more involved in the preschool program, or who took an active interest in the child's acquisition of the second language tended to have children who participated enthusiastically.
2. The teacher's warmth, skill in recognizing difficulties at home, and in assisting parents in dealing effectively with these difficulties influenced parental attitudes to the children. The child's successful adjustment appeared to be influenced positively by the establishment of good communication between teacher and parent, home and preschool.

VIII. PROGRAM EVALUATION

Dr. Hillel Goelman was asked by the Management Committee to act as an outside evaluator for the program. After observing both the morning and afternoon groups, Dr. Goelman submitted the following report.

"On Wednesday, May 9, I observed the morning and afternoon classes at the Sexsmith ESL Preschool. Below is a summary of my observations and impressions on the program.

1) Overall, I felt that the program was well organized and provided valuable social and learning experiences for the children. The teacher is well motivated and has marvellous rapport with the children. The children obviously enjoy being in the program which provides them with a wide range of materials and age appropriate activities.

2) The oral language environment was rich, varied and stimulating. The teacher made every effort to communicate with the children in large groups, small groups and individually. Her language succeeded in engaging the children in meaningful discourse with herself and with the other children. This was particularly noteworthy as she succeeded in facilitating a great deal of child-child language interaction. Her language reflected a wide range of linguistic forms and functions and was an appropriate,

meaningful, educational and even enjoyable form of interaction between her and the children. I would consider the oral language environment of the program its major strength. It would stand out in a "mainstream" early childhood program and is all the more noteworthy due to the ESL component of the program.

3) I felt that more could be done in the realm of exposing the children to the forms and functions of written language. Some ways in which this could be accomplished are the following: the use of experience charts, names on coat hooks, captions on pictures, a job board or attendance board with the children's names, more noticeable signs in the various activity areas. Many of the children's drawings and paintings had captions or descriptions but the writing was small and the pictures hung too high for the words to have any meaning to the children. A menu of foods was available in the play restaurant and copies were available in English, Chinese and Punjabi. Overall, though, the children could benefit from greater exposure to written language in ways which are both planned and incidental.

4) The room had most of the appropriate activity areas for a preschool program. Art seemed to work well with a variety of activities and a number of children doing a number of different open ended projects. The manipulatives and fine motor area I think could be improved in variety, quality and quantity. The block area seemed to work well although it could be improved with perhaps fewer blocks stored more neatly with appropriate paper shapes indicating where to store the different shaped blocks. The science area was small and did not seem to work too well. There were too many things on too small a table, no sign indicating what the area was or what the objects were on the table. The woodworking corner needed more materials and, I think, a different place in the room. It was quite near the painting easel which could have caused problems with the children painting.

Overall, I thought the room was organized well considering its small size, and given the constraints of budget, was fairly well stocked with appropriate materials. My recommendation in terms of the activity areas which were not working well (science and wood working) would be to use them only occasionally and on those occasions to plan their use and the materials very carefully.

5) I felt that the program accomplished most of the social, emotional, physical and intellectual goals set out in the program description. I feel that it also accomplished most of the goals for oral language development; though, as I have indicated, more could be done in the area of written language.

6) The teacher did appear to make the effort to have the program and physical environment reflect the children's cultural bakcground in terms of the pictures on the walls and some of the activities which the class engaged in. I did not see, however, many materials or dress ups which reflected the different cultures.

7) The program seemed to provide the children with the opportunity to develop awareness of their body parts through games and discussion and they were also clearly able to take care of their own personal needs. The program also provided opportunities for the children to develop their fine motor skills.

8) The children were given the opportunity to make choices regarding their activities, materials, and playmates. The children showed initiative in seeking their own solutions to problems and were also presented with opportunities by the teacher to use their problem-solving skills. Language was definitely used as a major tool in problem solving and exploring the environment.

In general, I thought the program was a good one which presented the children with a stimulating environment. I think most of my recommendations could be accomplished if a second or assistant teacher were available to help plan the program, organize the activity areas and monitor their use. An increase in the materials budget would also allow for selection of a wider variety of learning materials, especially in the area of manipulatives and fine motor materials.

It is clear to me that the teacher is a highly motivated and committed individual who has devoted many hours of planning to the program and she should be commended for her work. The areas of constructive criticism and recommendations should not be taken as a criticism of her personally, but rather as an indication of how, in my opinion, a good preschool program could become an excellent one."

Dr. Goelman is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Language Education at the University of British Columbia. He is a specialist in early childhood education with a particular interest in the language and cognitive development of preschool children.

IX. PROJECT AS DEMONSTRATION

The Sexsmith Project provided a demonstration centre for institutions and individuals in the community. Expertise gained through observations at Sexsmith was shared with community groups and associations, educational institutions and others concerned with improving the quality of educational experiences offered in the early years, both within and outside the province of British Columbia. A brief summary follows:

1. The program was of interest to both ESL and Early Childhood Education teachers, several of whom made repeated visits to the centre. Many observers and student-teachers from local community colleges, universities and the community at large observed the Sexsmith Preschool.

Community Colleges

Douglas College, New Westminster, B.C.

- 1 instructor
- 5 students

Vancouver Community College, Langara, Vancouver, B.C.

- 4 instructors
- 12 students

Universities

University of British Columbia

- 7 graduate students

Community at Large

North Vancouver and West Vancouver School Board, Continuing Education

- 3 students

Immigrant Resources Project

- 4 visitors

Vancouver School Board

- 4 visitors

Practicing Early Childhood Education Teachers

- 11 observers

Various institutions and individuals from the Community

- 9 observers

2. Insights gained from the Sexsmith Preschool were shared provincially and outside the province of B.C. at educational institutions and conferences. A summary of presentations follows:

TESL (Teachers of English as a Second Language) Edmonton, Alberta, 1983.

TESOL (International Association of Teachers of English to Students of other Languages) Toronto, Ontario, 1983.

TEAL (Association of B.C. Teachers of English as an Additional Language) Vancouver, B.C., 1984

TESOL, Houston, Texas, 1984.

TESL Canada, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1984.

ACEI, (Association of Childhood Educators International) Vancouver, B.C., 1984.

Educational Institutions

North and West Vancouver School Board, Continuing Education

- presentation made to Early Childhood Education class

Douglas College

- presentation to faculty
- presentation to Early Childhood Education classes, 1983 and 1984

University of British Columbia

- presentations made to the following graduate seminars

EDYC 585 (graduate Early Childhood seminar)

ENED 550 (graduate ESL seminar)

EDYC 565 (graduate Early Childhood seminar)

EDYC 588 (graduate Child Language seminar)

The overall success of the project as a demonstration facility is exemplified by the ongoing interest and exchange of ideas it is fostering on a local, national and an international level.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are drawn from the two year pilot project at the Sexsmith Demonstration ESL/Preschool.

1. Initial Procedures

It is recommended that:

- the teacher arrange interviews with the parents prior to the beginning of classes
- the teacher be provided with assistance during interviews so the child can be shown around the room while the parent(s) is being interviewed.
- a multicultural home/school worker be available to translate information if necessary.
- a parent information package or handbook translated into appropriate languages be compiled for distribution to parents during interviews.

Guidelines for the initial interview should include:

- Expectations of parents regarding:
  - forms to be completed
  - time and place for drop-off and pick-up
  - explanations of procedures if parents are late or the child is absent
  - requirements for clothing, snack, etc.
  - attendance at parent meetings
  - procedure for home visits
  - preschool involvement in the program

- Explanations regarding the program:
    - goals and philosophy
    - daily routines
    - events planned during the year
    - gradual entry procedure
- Information about children:
    - health, allergies, fears, etc.
    - language ability in first and second language
    - special interests (e.g. favourite toy(s))
    - home background, number of adults in the home
    - special arrangements for childcare
    - previous Early Childhood program experiences
    - caregivers who will drop off and pick up children.

Guidelines for gradual entry:

It is recommended that:

- Children attend preschool in small groups for the first week.
- The teacher be prepared to handle separation anxiety with the help of multicultural workers if necessary.
- Parents be encouraged to remain with the child until he/she is ready to separate.
- Daily routines be established and maintained. Non-verbal cues be used to indicate a change in activity.

- Key phrases and gestures be used consistently to help children understand the directions and daily routines.

2. Program Planning

It is recommended that the curriculum in a multicultural preschool be modified to meet different cultural and linguistic needs. Special consideration must be given to the following:

- Differences in Learning Styles

Some groups may need a different educational approach than is common in most Canadian preschools. Small teacher-directed group activities to experience new materials with the accompanying new language may be a necessary component for ESL children. Such activities could be presented during part of the free play period when other children are extending their learning through open-ended play. Children whose home language is not English may need more teacher direction, non-verbal as well as verbal, to gain the maximum benefit from preschool activities.

- Differences in Values Between Home and School

Unfamiliar program activities which may present a conflict between home and preschool, such as messy art activities, need to be introduced gradually with careful attention given to preparation of children and parents beforehand.

Some parents may not understand the value of play as a medium for learning in early childhood; therefore, teachers will need to explain these values for parents. Some children may not have been given many opportunities to play outdoors and will need encouragement in using outdoor equipment.

- Differences in Language

All children are experienced language users when they come to preschool. They know what language is, what it does and how to use it purposefully. ESL children however, for the first time in their lives, may not be able to elicit a satisfactory response. Curriculum activities should make allowances for a period of adjustment.

Children have already developed some concepts such as shape and size, in their first language. Transfering these concepts into English requires learning English labels. Words are labels for concepts, symbols for things, therefore, program activities must provide opportunities throughout the day for relating familiar concrete objects to verbal expression. For example: Shapes can be extended from free play to art work to felt board stories to songs and games.

Teacher directed circle activities should be carefully planned to allow children the opportunity to participate

non-verbally before expecting them to participate verbally.

Children should be exposed to English in a variety of ways including conversations with adults and peers, structured language lessons in small groups, and through songs, rhymes and rhythm.

Each class should include competent English speakers, peer and adult, to provide ESL children with English models.

Children should be free to use their first language in the classroom whenever they wish.

Children should be exposed to first and second language in oral as well as in written form.

- Differences in Cultural Background

Curriculum activities should consider each child's previous experiences, home background and culture.

Retention of first culture is important for self-concept therefore, whenever possible, festivals and other events important to the children in the class, should be celebrated to enlarge cultural awareness amongst the children.

Cross cultural friendships should be encouraged so children will learn about cultural diversity directly, through interacting with each other.

3. Classroom Preparation

It is recommended that:

- The room be arranged to promote maximum non-verbal learning by providing:
  - materials organized in a logical manner so that children are encouraged to sort, sequence and classify objects as they use them
  - materials that are carefully selected and presented in a limited way in the early weeks to avoid overwhelming the children who may be new to a preschool experience
  - materials, displays and room decorations which reflect the cultures represented in the class
  - extensive use of labels, first with pictures and then with printed words written in all languages spoken in the room
  - a selection of books and materials which meet the needs of the ESL child. For example, books provided should include those without words, picture books, books with repetitous phrases, books in first language, books presenting specific concepts such as shape or colour. Tapes and felt board stories are valuable additions to this list
  - a room with centres such as a science area where children can actively explore multi-sensory materials
  - carefully chosen materials such as playdough,

a doctor's kit or a cash register, that stimulate social interactions both non-verbal and verbal

- it is further suggested that materials which stereotype in any way (i.e. by culture, sex or religion) should be removed from the classroom.

4. Parent Involvement

It is recommended that:

- Parents be encouraged to participate in the program activities in a variety of ways such as:
  - attending parent meetings
  - contributing materials
  - acting as volunteers in the classroom
  - sharing their cultural heritage with the children
  - serving on a parents' committee or acting as advocates for Early Childhood Education
- a Handbook be compiled containing the following information in translation as necessary:
  - the name, address and phone number of the preschool
  - the name of the teacher
  - school dates, beginning and end of the year, holidays
  - the number of children enrolled
  - suggested snacks

- an invitation to visit the class
- an invitation to share a talent or a cultural experience with the class.

- a bulletin board be provided for parent information about the preschool, community events and available adult English classes
- an area be reserved in the classroom for parents to meet, observe and wait for their children
- an appropriate parent education program be planned and implemented
- home visits be carried out as a regular part of orientation procedures
- multicultural home school workers be used routinely to facilitate interaction between home and social

5. Administration

It is recommended that:

- The classes be comprised of mixed age groups of three and four year olds and that children who are three after January first not be enrolled to fill vacancies that exist during the remainder of the school year.

- The teacher, in addition to being well qualified in Early Childhood Education, should have additional training and experience in Second Language learning and in working in multicultural settings.

- The teacher be prepared to work as a member of a team with volunteers, and student teachers.

- The teacher be prepared to develop curriculum materials for a multicultural program.

- The teacher be committed to encouraging parent involvement in the program.

- Space be provided for parents to meet and provisions be made for observation of their children in class.

- A financial structure be established to ensure that there is an assistant for each class.

6. General Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- children in a multicultural society be given "an equal opportunity for education."

- children who speak languages other than Standard Canadian English be given opportunities to learn the language of instruction during the most productive years for language development, the preschool years.

- children be exposed to peers from a variety of cultures in a group environment during the formative years so that they may develop as awareness and appreciation of of differences and similarities.

- preschool programs be developed in a responsible and coordinated manner to meet the diverse needs of children in a multicultural society.

> "Society has an obligation to supplement the resources of the family through education and other means so that the lives of children need not be restricted by the facts of their birth, so that all children can acquire the skills necessary to exercise their basic freedoms as citizens, so that having acquired those skills they may make an unhampered contribution to their society."
>
> (Admittance Restricted: The Child as a Citizen in Canada. 1978)

It seems fitting to reiterate the above quote in this section. Responsibility for the growth, development and the rights of all children rests with everyone in our society. However it is the social institutions such as School Boards who point the way by forward thinking policies and programs. Therefore, it is further recommended that the Vancouver School Board support the location of preschool programs on school property. It is understood that the present School Act precludes provision of educational services by the school system to children under five. However, because of the crucial nature of the early childhood multicultural issue, the Vancouver School Board is urged to investigate ways of promoting preschool programs to facilitate the transition of children from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds into the mainstream.

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APPENDIX

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